

STOLEN JEWELS

By George Elmer Cobb.

"Which does Mae like best?"

"Two evenings in the week, Rufus Dodge, Saturday evening and Sunday, Worth Bartley."

"And the rest of the time?"

"Well, I think young Bartley is the favorite. He should be—a fine, manly fellow, ambitious, earnest and handsome. Not that Dodge is in any way bad. Some time ago, however,



Began Looking About the Spot.

he won a prize in a foreign lottery."

"How much?"

"One thousand dollars. He has salted it away in bank, all right, but he boasts of it constantly. Brags of his luck and, mark me, with the speculative fever latent in his veins, will some day lose it just as easily as he got it."

Thus two members of the social circle in which pretty Mae Winston was the belle and Bartley and Dodge worthy and popular members. They were a theme of a good many dis-

cussions, but all that was completely overshadowed the day succeeding to that upon which the foregoing conversation took place. The parties to the same met again.

"What do you think of the latest?"

"The diamond robbery up at the Beeches?"

"Yes. The ysay the burglars gto a box of jewels worth \$20,000."

"Whew! That's some value!"

"Here's a printed description and reward offered—\$5,000 for the recovery of the gems—double that for the additional conviction of the thieves."

"It almost tempts a fellow to play the detective."

The great jewel robbery was the biggest sensation that Fairmont had ever known. A great many wealthy people lived near the pretty lake adjoining the town, and the robbers had sought a grand field for operations. They seemed to have vanished completely, however, leaving no clew behind them. Then two evenings later a new excitement set the village all agog. Bartley had been found wounded and insensible in a waste place of ground about a mile from the village.

It was Saturday night, and Worth, apparently, had been on his way from the neighboring town where he worked, bent on his regular visit to the Winston family, when attacked. He had been struck on the head with some heavy, blunt instrument. The motive of the assault was a mystery, for although his clothing had been ransacked and torn, his money and jewelry were intact.

For twenty-four hours Worth lay insensible at the home of a relative, whither he had been removed. Then a fever set in, and for over a week he was delirious or too weak to talk. Mae visited him several times and sent him flowers and delicacies. Meantime, Rufus had come into a new experience. He called at the Winston home one day and sought a private interview.